

## Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers August 5, 2003

### In the News...

#### **NTSB Urges Automakers to Redesign 15-Passenger Vans**

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) this week recommended that Ford Motor Co. and General Motors redesign key features of 15-passenger vans popular with churches, civic groups and colleges, to make them safer by 2006. The government safety group urged the automakers to voluntarily rework seat belts to make latch components more accessible and offer more interior protection to occupants during rollover crashes. **For the full article, visit** <http://www.thewbalchannel.com/money/2334453/detail.html>.

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#### **Highway Fatalities in 2002 Reach Highest Level Since 1990**

Highway fatalities in 2002 reached the highest level since 1990 while crash-related injuries hit an all-time low, NHTSA announced. As highway crashes continue to claim the lives of thousands, the grim statistics underscore the need for better state laws, stricter enforcement and safer driving behavior. Alcohol-related fatalities remained at 41 percent of the total with 17,419 deaths in 2002, up slightly from 17,400 in 2001. **For a copy of the FARS report, visit** <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/Rpts/2003/Assess02.pdf>.

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#### **Large Truck-Related Fatalities in 2002 at Lowest Level Since 1975**

Large truck-related fatalities in 2002 were at their lowest level since the first recorded statistics in 1975, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) announced. U.S. DOT Secretary Norman Mineta was pleased to see the downward trend in truck-related fatalities, but he re-emphasized his commitment to reducing deaths and injuries further during an all-hands meeting with NHTSA, the Federal Highway Administration and FMCSA this week. In 2002, truck-related fatalities decreased 4.2 percent from 2001 figures. The total number of people killed in truck crashes was 4,897, compared with 5,111 people in 2001. This is the fifth consecutive year for decreases in both the large truck fatality rate and fatalities in large truck-related crashes. **To view these crash statistics, visit the FMCSA website at** <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/>.

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#### **New Routing System Aims to Reduce Costs for Fleets**

A new U.K. transport management system aims to reduce costs for fleets by providing accurate route planning and management guidance. Map & Guide calculates routes down to house-number precision, providing alternatives and generating the quickest route. Ulf Bergqvist, area manager for Map & Guide, Scandinavia and Great Britain said, "An in-built cost calculator will give businesses a detailed cost breakdown for each journey. It helps them manage multiple routes too." Additional features include road toll cost calculator, route analysis tool and seamless integration with other software packages including Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook.

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#### **Third of Four Reports in High Priority Safety Concerns Released by NHTSA**

NHTSA has released this week, the third of four reports in high priority safety concerns. The newest report examines safety belt use and it joins previous reports on vehicle compatibility and rollover mitigation. All are now available on the NHTSA website at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/IPTReports.html>, also on the U.S. Department of Transportation's docket management system at <http://dms.dot.gov/>. While the reports are final, the agency is offering the

public the opportunity to comment on the agency's planned activities for each of the four documents. The comments will be considered for future agency efforts.

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### **NHTSA Nears Completion of Two-Year Review of HID Headlights**

Regulators at NHTSA are nearing completion of a two-year review of headlight glare, which could lead to new rules for brighter high-intensity discharge, or HID, headlights that are becoming increasingly popular on premium cars and light vehicles sold by Audi, BMW, Lexus and Range Rover. NHTSA is trying to strike a balance between capturing the benefits and energy savings of the new technology, and unintended consequences. The agency also is likely to lower the maximum height for SUVs and other light trucks, whose higher lamp positions can shine into a car's rearview mirrors. **For the full article, visit <http://www.detnews.com/2003/autosinsider/0307/20/b01-221695.htm>.**

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### **High-Tech Alert System Being Tested**

Several automakers and suppliers, along with agencies such as NHTSA, are testing high-tech systems that alert motorists if they're approaching other vehicles or curves too quickly or drifting off the road.

**For the full article, visit <http://www.detnews.com/2003/autosinsider/0307/27/autos-227551.htm>.**

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### **FMCSA Moves to Close Loophole in Employee Driving Screening Rules**

The FMCSA has moved to close what many see as a huge loophole in employee driver screening rules that includes the absence of details regarding the type of information they are to obtain from current or previous employers and the lack of any regulatory requirement that those employers respond to employment history requests. Current rules require new and prospective employers to investigate a driver's employment history going back three years. **For the full story, visit**

**[http://www.truckinginfo.com/news/news\\_detail.asp?news\\_id=50031&news\\_category\\_id=3](http://www.truckinginfo.com/news/news_detail.asp?news_id=50031&news_category_id=3).**

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### **GM to Offer Electrically Powered Second Seat to Assist Disabled and Elderly Passengers**

GM will offer electrically powered second seat to assist disabled and elderly passengers. This will be a dealer-installed option on 2004 extended length minivans. The seat will pivot and extend to the side, allowing passengers to sit in the seat before entering the vehicle. This is part of a broader effort by GM Mobility. **For more details, visit the GM Website at**

**[http://www.gm.com/automotive/vehicle\\_shopping/gm\\_mobility/](http://www.gm.com/automotive/vehicle_shopping/gm_mobility/).**

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### **TRIP has New Plan for Older Drivers**

The Road Information Program (TRIP) has a plan to allow older Americans to maintain their independence by staying on the roadways. The report is called Designing Roadways To Safely Accommodate the Increasingly Mobile Older Driver and is available on the TRIP website at

**<http://www.tripnet.org/OlderDrivers2003Study.PDF>.**

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### **NHTSA Defines a New Subcategory of School Buses**

NHTSA defined a new subcategory of school buses for use in transporting children in trips other than to and from school. NHTSA's new subcategory, the "multifunction school activity bus" (MFSAB) is defined as a vehicle that is sold for purposes that do not include transportation between home and school for students from kindergarten through Grade 12. Accordingly, these multifunction buses will be exempt from requirements for traffic control equipment requirements when the rule takes effect in 30 days. This new class of vehicles should serve as a safe choice for companies and institutions that have a need to transport groups of people. A particular safety benefit exists for transporting 12 to 15 passengers, since school buses have a better safety record than 15-passenger vans for this purpose.

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## Legislation for Use of Black Box Information is Proposed

Since the mid-1970s -- in an effort to make air bags safer and more efficient -- GM has installed crash data "black boxes." Now, with the devices in an estimated 25 million cars -- primarily GM and Ford products -- and the data increasingly being used by the courts and law enforcement officers, California Assemblyman Tim Leslie wants to make it clear who can use the information and when. Calling the device a "black box" may be a bit of a misnomer. Unlike airplane black boxes, the devices in cars store data on the five seconds before an accident and air bag deployment and seven seconds after. The stored information includes the speed of the vehicle, how fast it stopped, whether brakes were applied, and the position of the steering wheel. **For a copy of the proposed legislation, visit**

[http://leginfo.ca.gov/pub/bill/asm/ab\\_0201-0250/ab\\_213\\_bill\\_20030714\\_amended\\_sen.html](http://leginfo.ca.gov/pub/bill/asm/ab_0201-0250/ab_213_bill_20030714_amended_sen.html).

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## 10 Cheapest Cars to Insure and 25 Most Stolen Vehicles

Edmunds.com has come out with a new listing of the "The 10 Cheapest Vehicles to Insure" in their first five years. There are some surprises in the report. **To see the list, visit**

<http://moneycentral.msn.com/content/Insurance/Insureyourcar/P56490.asp?special=030701insure>. Another list accessible now by CCC Information Services is the "Most Stolen Vehicles in 2002."

**That list is available at**

<http://moneycentral.msn.com/content/Insurance/Insureyourcar/P35264.asp>.

**Save the Date!**

**7th Annual**

**Drive Safely Work Week**

**October 6 -10, 2003**

**2003 Theme: Safe Driving is Everyone's Business. Do Your Part.**

This year's campaign spotlights the positive actions that each driver can take to ensure their safety and the safety of others sharing the road as they drive for work or commute to and from work.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
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29	30	31		

Drive Safely Work Week Campaign Toolkits

Available June 1st

Order Your Kit On-line at [www.trafficsafety.org](http://www.trafficsafety.org) or

Call 1-888-221-0045



road-wise  
workforce



Dan Vartanian  
NETS Coordinator  
Office of Highway Safety Planning  
(517) 333-5322  
[vartanid@michigan.gov](mailto:vartanid@michigan.gov)  
[www.michnets.org](http://www.michnets.org)

